

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 PA-01 ICA-11
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P R 211419Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8138
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW BY POUCH
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 1842

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, ET
SUBJECT: LONDON TIMES ARTICLE ON ETHIOPIAN "RED TERROR" CAMPAIGN

REF: (A) STATE 098804; (B) ADDIS ABABA 1012; (C) ADDIS ABABA
1556

SUMMARY: LONDON TIMES ARTICLE CITED REFTEL (A) APPEARS
TO BE COLLECTION OF RUMORS OF INCIDENTS WHICH HAVE SUR-
FACED OVER PAST 4-5 MONTHS. THERE ARE NUMEROUS INACCU-
RACIES IN ARTICLE WHICH SERVE TO DRAMATIZE "RED TERROR" CAM-
PAIGN FOR JOURNALISTIC PURPOSES. HOWEVER, IMPACT OF
CAMPAIGN ON AVERAGE ADDIS ABABA RESIDENT IS QUITE ACCU-
RATELY REFLECTED IN STORY. ETHIOPIAN GOVT (PMGSE) NOW
SEEMS TO BE ATTEMPTING TO EXERT GREATER CONTROL OVER MA-
JOR ELEMENTS CONDUCTING CAMPAIGN AS REPORTED REFTEL (B).
MANY YOUTHS WHO WERE "EXPOSED" AS EPRP AND/OR IMPRISONED
HAVE BEEN AMNESTIED AND RELEASED PAST 10 DAYS, BUT "RED
TERROR" IS STILL CONTINUING, ALBEIT AT REDUCED AND
MORE CLANDESTINE PACE. END SUMMARY.

1. LONDON TIMES ARTICLE IN FIRST PARAGRAPH ASSERTS
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"100 PEOPLE OR SO WILL DIE AS ON EVERY OTHER NIGHT."
WHILE THERE MAY HAVE BEEN 2 OR 3 OCCASIONS WHEN AS
MANY AS 100 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED AT ONE TIME, EM-
BASSY HAS USED AVERAGE FIGURE OF 10-20 PER DAY FOR
HEIGHT OF CAMPAIGN. THIS APPEARS TO HAVE DECREASED
SIGNIFICANTLY OVER PAST TWO WEEKS TO PROBABLY AN AVER-
AGE OF 5-10 PERSONS PER DAY IN ADDIS. ARTICLE FURTHER

CLAIMED IN PARA 1 THAT THERE WERE "FIVE OFFICIAL MURDER SQUADS." IN REALITY, THERE APPEAR TO BE THREE AUTONOMOUS GROUPS WHICH ARE CHIEFLY RESPONSIBLE FOR EXECUTIONS, AS REPORTED REFTEL (B), BUT NOT ALL ARE "OFFICIAL" IN THE SENSE THAT THEY ARE DIRECTLY CONTROLLED BY DIRG, AND MAY IN FACT BE ACTIVELY COMPETING AMONG THEMSELVES FOR POLITICAL POWER. (AUTHOR MAY HAVE IN MIND FIVE MARXIST-LENINIST GROUPS PLEDGED TO FORM WORKERS' PARTY WHICH HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME EXECUTIONS, BUT ARE EVEN LESS OFFICIAL AND MORE INTERNALLY COMPETITIVE THAN 3 GROUPS CITED ABOVE.)

2. SERIES OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING MOSLEM MOSQUE, LEADER OF MOSLEM COMMUNITY (IMAM) AND HIS FAMILY ARE PARTIALLY TRUE. THESE INCIDENTS ALLEGEDLY OCCURRED IN JANUARY, BUT WERE NOT RESULT OF PMGSE DECISIONS. ONE OF FIVE MARXIST-LENINIST GROUPS HAD TAKEN OVER MOSQUE FOR ONE DAY TO HOLD POLITICAL SEMINAR FOR RESIDENTS IN AREA. MOSQUE WAS RAIDED VIOLENTLY BY ANOTHER OF M-L GROUPS AND PERHAPS 25-40 PEOPLE WERE KILLED OR WOUNDED IN ATTACK. ONE OF THOSE KILLED WAS RUMORED TO HAVE BEEN SON OF IMAM, BUT THIS WAS NOT CONFIRMED DEFINITELY, ALTHOUGH PROBABLY TRUE. THERE HAS NOT BEEN SYSTEMATIC OR DELIBERATE CAMPAIGN AGAINST MOSLEM COMMUNITY IN ADDIS ABABA, AND IN FACT PMGSE HAS MADE SPECIAL EFFORT TO IMPROVE FORMERLY LOW STATUS OF

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MOSLEMS. FACT THAT MOSQUE IS LOCATED IN MARKET (MERCATO) AREA OF ADDIS, WHERE THERE HAS BEEN HEAVY CONCENTRATION OF ANTI-GOVT ELEMENTS, HAS BEEN THE CAUSE OF VIOLENCE IN AREA OF MOSQUE.

3. ARTICLE CLAIMED IN PARAS 5 AND 6 THAT CHILDREN WERE SHOT IN THEIR BEDS IN FRONT OF PARENTS AND THEN HAD NOTE ATTACHED TO CORPSE WITH "NAIL." EMBASSY HAS NOT HEARD OF ANY STORIES AS GRUESOME AS THIS AND BELIEVES THAT EVEN IF IT DID OCCUR, IT IS NOT PRACTICE OF PMGSE. IN RECENT WEEKS, PMGSE HAS TAKEN FORCEFUL ACTION AGAINST THOSE WHO HAVE MOST BLATANTLY AND UNJUSTIFIABLY ABUSED CITIZENRY IN NAME OF "RED TERROR." NEVERTHELESS, THOSE CORPSES WHICH ARE LEFT IN STREETS ARE USUALLY MARKED WITH NOTES PROCLAIMING "RED TERROR" WILL PREVAIL.

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4. IN PARA 10 AUTHOR REFERS TO NORWEGIAN AND SWEDISH AMBAS-
SADORS. THERE IS NO NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR RESIDENT IN ADDIS,
ALTHOUGH ONE IS ACCREDITED AND RESIDENT IN NAIROBI. HE DOES
VISIT ADDIS OCCASIONALLY, BUT REPORTEDLY IS MORE CONCERNED
WITH WELFARE OF HIS OWN NATIONALS THAN THAT OF ETHIOPIANS.
IN ANY EVENT, BOTH HE AND RESIDENT SWEDISH AMBASSADOR HAVE
CONFIRMED TO CHARGE THAT NEITHER HAS MADE ANYTHING RESEMBL-
ING PROTEST TO FONMIN AGAINST MURDERS, ALTHOUGH THEY DO FEEL
STRONGLY ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS HERE AND REPORT TO
HOME CAPITALS ON SUBJECT.

5. IN PARAS 11-14 ARTICLE ACCURATELY DESCRIBES SUB-DISTRICTS
(URBAN DWELLERS' ASSOCIATIONS OR KEBELES) OF ADDIS ABABA
AS NUMBERING 300 (ACTUALLY 289), ENTITLED TO TAKE "REVOL-
UTIONARY MEASURES," HAVING DEFENSE SQUADS OF 8-10 ARMED
PERSONS AND THE DENUNCIATION AND IMPRISONMENT PROGRAM AT
ITS HEIGHT IN JAN-MARCH PERIOD.

6. IN PARA 15, NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED PER DAY IS GROSSLY
EXAGGERATED. IN PARA 17 RUSSIANS ARE ACCUSED OF FORCING ETHIO-
PIANS TO KILL EACH OTHER. WE DOUBT IT. MOST EAST EUROPEANS SEEM
GENUINELY EMBARRASSED BY "RED TERROR," ALTHOUGH SOME EXCUSE
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IT AS INEVITABLE IN REVOLUTIONARY AND COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY
SITUATION. RED TERROR SIGNS ARE DISPLAYED EVERYWHERE THROUGH-
OUT ADDIS. MAYOR OF ADDIS IS CORRECTLY QUOTED FROM PAST FEB
THAT "RED TERROR" WILL LAST ANOTHER 4-6 WEEKS. BLOOD DOES
NOT FILL STREETS, NOR IS IT THICK LIKE OIL, NOR IS THE
BIBLE SUBJECT TO IDEOLOGICAL CLEARANCE. LEADERS OF ADDIS

CHURCHES DO NOT CONDONE "RED TERROR", ALTHOUGH THEY DO CON-
DEMN THE SOMALIS. EXTENSIVE AND SYSTEMATIC TORTURE IS NOT
PRACTICED IN KEBELES, NOR IS IT DIRECTED BY EAST GERMANS.
IN FACT, IT IS BELIEVED THAT EAST GERMANS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO
RESTRAIN URBAN TERRORIST CAMPAIGN. MANY OF BUREAUCRATS,
INCLUDING UNIVERSITY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, HAVE PARTICIPATED
FOR 2-5 DAYS IN HARVEST EFFORTS.

7. RESIDENT BRITISH AMBASSADOR INFORMED CHARGE THAT LONDON
TIMES HAD ADMITTED TO FONOFF INFORMATION IN ARTICLE WAS
COUPLE MONTHS OLD, BUT WOULD NOT REVEAL REAL NAME OF AUTHOR
OF STORY, ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR SUSPECTS IT IS A SCANDINAVIAN
MISSIONARY. ARTICLE HAS BEEN VEHEMENTLY ATTACKED IN ETHIO-
PIAN PRESS AS CLEAR EVIDENCE OF UK'S ANTI-ETHIOPIAN CAMPAIGN.

8. THERE HAS BEEN SOME EVIDENCE PAST WEEK THAT "RED TERROR"
HAS DECLINED GREATLY AND MANY OF THOSE HELD AS SUSPECTS IN
KEBELE "PRISONS" ARE BEING RELEASED. ON APRIL 15, 37 YOUTHS
WERE AMNESTIED IN GONDAR AND ON APRIL 18, 277 YOUTHS WERE
RELEASED IN ADDIS ABABA. ACCORDING TO PUBLICLY REPORTED
FIGURES IN GOVT-CONTROLLED PRESS, THERE HAVE BEEN MORE THAN
400 PERSONS KILLED. THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN "EXPOSED" AND/OR
IMPRISONED, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED WHO HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO
WORK ON STATE FARMS, APPROACHES 14,000. IT IS UNKNOWN HOW
AMNY OF THESE PERSONS HAVE BEEN RELEASED, BUT PROBABLY OVER-
WHELMING MAJORITY ARE NOW FREE. REPORTS OF TORTURE HAVE
BEEN VERY INFREQUENT, ALTHOUGH ROUGH TREATMENT OF "PRISONERS"
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IS COMMON. UNOFFICIAL BUT FAIRLY ACCURATE ESTIMATES OF THOSE
KILLED OVER PAST 5 MONTHS AS RESULT OF "RED TERROR" THROUGH-
OUT COUNTRY PROBABLY BETWEEN 1500-2000. THOSE DETAINED PRO-
BABLY 15-20,000. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS SECURITY SITUATION FOR
AVERAGE ETHIOPIAN IS IMPROVING AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO IM-
PROVE IN SHORT TERM.
MATHERON

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